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Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 19
Economic and social development in Western Asia

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Overall orientation

19.1 The overall orientation of the programme for the period 2018-2019 is to foster sustainable development, social justice and regional integration among the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in particular for the least developed and conflict-affected countries. ESCWA, through its seven interdependent subprogrammes, is responsible for the implementation of this programme.

19.2 The mandate for the programme is provided in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1818 (LV), establishing ESCWA, and 1985/69, amending its terms of reference to underscore the social functions of the Commission. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system, requested regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives and urged them to prioritize sustainable development initiatives at the country level.

19.3 ESCWA member States shape and define the Commission's priorities and approaches. At the twenty-eighth session of ESCWA, member States adopted the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, in which social justice was reaffirmed as a core value of the Arab and Islamic culture and a foundation for secure, cohesive and prosperous societies. In the Declaration, the secretariat of the Commission was requested to embed social justice in its work, and in particular in its efforts to support the preparation, monitoring and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The secretariat was further called upon to bolster its research and advisory efforts in the areas of justice, poverty, inequality, social protection, social inclusion, women's empowerment, natural resources management, access to technology and good governance, as well as trade policies and their role in achieving development. The Declaration also reinforced the mandate of the Commission to monitor the effects of the occupation of Palestine.

19.4 In the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (General Assembly resolution 70/1), Member States pledged that no one would be left behind. In the 2030 Agenda, transformative action was called for to eliminate poverty and globally embark upon a sustainable and resilient path for development and growth through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their means of implementation. Member States recognized the importance of the regional and subregional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in promoting sustainable development. In the 2030 Agenda, Member States also emphasized the role of the regional commissions in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and agreed that regional and subregional frameworks could facilitate the effective translation of policies into concrete action at the national level.

19.5 In the 2030 Agenda, Member States recognized that sustainable development could not be realized without peace and security and, conversely, that peace and security would be at risk without sustainable development. They also recognized the need to build peaceful and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, including the right to development, on effective rule of law, on good governance at all levels and on transparent and

accountable institutions. In the 2030 Agenda, Member States also called for measures and actions to be taken to remove all obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment.

19.6 In the Arab region, widespread conflict is the dominant challenge to the developmental landscape. In addition to causing loss of life, conflict and occupation hinder sustainable development and lead to economic disintegration, damage to infrastructure, loss of social cohesion, diminished access to social services and violations of basic human rights. The region has the world's largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons, which has further exacerbated the hardships of those who are already vulnerable, with particularly adverse effects on women and children. While not all the countries in the Arab region are directly experiencing violent conflict, development in the region as a whole has been negatively affected by increasing insecurity. Countries in conflict have witnessed severe reversals in development gains and the spillover effects have adversely impacted neighbouring countries.

19.7 Achieving sustainable growth is another key challenge facing the Arab region. Low productivity, lack of economic diversification and technological innovation, a large informal labour market and the absence of adequate social protection schemes have resulted in increasing and widespread poverty, inequality and the world's highest youth unemployment rates. Ineffective trade and fiscal policies exacerbate the region's low rates of intraregional trade and interrupt value chains. In addition to economic inequalities, the region suffers from other forms of inequality, most notably gender inequality, unequal access to information and services, and inadequate attention to the needs of vulnerable population groups, such as youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, informal workers and migrants.

19.8 Moreover, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption across the region place a growing burden on scarce natural resources such as water, energy and arable land and pose serious challenges to food security. Climate change further exacerbates the region's desertification and leads to more frequent occurrences of natural disasters.

19.9 Institutional weakness is an overarching challenge that continues to face the Arab region in the implementation of a sustainable development agenda. Institutions suffer from political, financial, capacity and technical limitations, which hinder their effectiveness. This institutional weakness impedes Arab countries from fostering inclusive policymaking processes, limits their capacity to produce the high-quality data required for evidence-based policymaking and slows the mobilization of the necessary means of implementation, such as financing, technology and international or regional cooperation.

19.10 The ESCWA strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 envisages an integrated response to these significant obstacles to sustainable development. The Commission's response to these challenges also takes into consideration the collective approach designed by the regional commissions for achieving the 2030 Agenda, which includes integrating Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning and fiscal frameworks; promoting policy coherence, consistency and coordination across sectors and levels of intervention; enhancing data and statistical capacities of member States; and leveraging appropriate means

of implementation, including financing for development, science, technology and innovation, and global and regional partnerships.

19.11 First and foremost, ESCWA will work on the promotion of sustainable development, regionally, subregionally and nationally. ESCWA will help member States design Arab strategies for the integrated management of natural resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction. It will support member States in their efforts to improve the efficient use of natural resources, promote the application of appropriate green technologies and facilitate regional cooperation and coordination to enhance food, water and energy security and the alleviation of rural poverty. ESCWA will also promote the design of inclusive economic policies employing multidimensional poverty approaches by facilitating constructive dialogue on government budgets and fiscal policy and building the capacities of Member States to conduct evidence-based policy forecasts and assessments. Member States will be supported in mobilizing financial resources for development and in designing appropriate financing policies to address socioeconomic development gaps. In cooperation with regional and international partners, ESCWA will offer a comprehensive institutional framework to steer the regional statistical development agenda. It will support Member States in collecting, analysing, harmonizing and disseminating statistical data for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and building the capacity of national statistical systems to ensure the production of high-quality data.

19.12 During 2018-2019, ESCWA will seek to place social justice at the heart of development in the Arab region. ESCWA will promote a rights-based approach to inclusive social and economic policymaking, helping member States mainstream key population and human development issues into national strategies and plans, with a focus on youth development, international migration and social protection. ESCWA will make use of its multidisciplinary structure to support member States in strengthening policy integration, including in the area of economic and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, through broad-based civic participation. It will also continue its support to member States in eliminating gender inequality in policies, strategies, legislation and programmes. ESCWA will intensify its support to national and regional efforts to overcome all forms of discrimination against women and to secure their equal access to resources and participation in decision-making. Furthermore, ESCWA will help member States to develop narratives that foster belonging, regional engagement and reconciliation in order to forge common understandings of development priorities and shared destinies. ESCWA will address the external pressures and spillover effects of conflict, by working with member States to establish regional frameworks designed to actively support efforts at building social cohesion and resilience. ESCWA will also continue to monitor the effects of conflict and occupation and their detrimental impact on the attainment of justice in its multiple dimensions.

19.13 ESCWA recognizes the potential of greater regional integration to address the region's key challenges most effectively. National resilience with respect to economic, social and political shocks is only possible within a regional framework that facilitates both integration in equitable global markets and the development of progressive political structures. ESCWA will undertake rigorous quantitative analyses of the legal and institutional arrangements to assist member States in formulating regional economic integration policies and the achievement of regional developmental objectives. It will also promote improved regional coordination

among member States with respect to cross-border infrastructure, especially in transport and trade facilitation. ESCWA will help advance regional approaches for climate change adaptation and mitigation by supporting the development of mechanisms to address climate change, including its impact on water resources and the resultant consequences for the poor. ESCWA will also serve as a forum for multisectoral policy dialogue on sustainable development issues to forge regional positions based on an enhanced science-policy interface, coherence across different sectors and institution-building. During the period 2018-2019, ESCWA will use its convening power to gather member States to discuss and share views on common and coordinated solutions to address the root causes of instability and the effects of this instability on people and their environment.

19.14 In its programming, ESCWA has considered how consecutive strategic frameworks can build upon each other towards achieving long-terms goals in line with the 2030 Agenda, and has set intermediate goals for 2023. ESCWA has also adopted a conceptual framework that is grounded in supporting Arab States and people to obtain and articulate a shared vision of the future they want in the era of the 2030 Agenda. ESCWA is committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective in its entire programme of work and its non-programmed activities. It will continue to lead the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

19.15 ESCWA will continue to expand its network of national, regional and international partners and will collaborate with intergovernmental bodies, United Nations organizations, donors, research institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to respond to the pressing needs and policy challenges of member States. Building on its special relationship with the League of Arab States, ESCWA will support the articulation of regional positions. It will also support the implementation of resolutions of high-level regional forums, mainly the Arab Economic and Social Development Summits.

19.16 ESCWA will continue to convene the Regional Coordination Mechanism as a platform for United Nations entities and regional organizations to discuss regional policy priorities and coordinate support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In order to ensure it can disseminate and operationalize the findings and recommendations of its normative work and respond effectively to the requests of its member States, ESCWA will mobilize additional financial and in-kind contributions. For this purpose, ESCWA will leverage the results and outputs of its regular programme of work and the strategic partnerships it builds across the region.

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development

Objective of the Organization: To achieve the integrated management of natural resources leading to improved food, water and energy security and enhanced resilience to climate change, and to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into regional and national policy processes

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased alignment of member States' national plans with the Sustainable Development Goals by through drawing upon the water-energy-food nexus	(i) Increased number of multisectoral institutional mechanisms established to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans
	(ii) Increased number of strategies, plans and policies adopted by line ministries to support the integrated management of natural resources
(b) Increased engagement by Member States in regional and subregional processes in support of agreements, strategies and standards related to water, energy, food and the environment	(i) Increased number of harmonized tools, techniques and guidelines implemented by member States to enhance food, water and energy security
	(ii) Increased number of joint initiatives and intergovernmental resolutions adopted to enhance regional cooperation on sustainability of natural resources
(c) Strengthened resilience of member States to climate change and natural disasters and of vulnerable communities	(i) Increased number of intergovernmental recommendations, resolutions and decrees adopted by member States across sectors that aim to coordinate responses to climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction
	(ii) Increased number of measures adopted by member States to mainstream the science-policy interface in relation to climate change

Strategy

19.17 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Sustainable Development Policies Division. The year 2015 has been marked as the year of sustainable development. It witnessed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which constitutes a robust and transformative agenda that builds on the social, economic, environmental and governance pillars of sustainable development and converges with global development processes, namely the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

19.18 Regional challenges persist, including rising demand for food, water and energy, increasing the heavy toll on scarce natural resources and causing environmental damage, unsustainable use of resources and food insecurity; prevailing unsustainable production and consumption patterns; inefficient patterns of energy production, distribution and consumption, adding to an already high volume of waste generated throughout the region; and climate change and its impact on natural resources.

19.19 ESCWA will assist member States in moving towards a sustainable development path by building strong and resilient institutions; supporting more efficient management of natural resources while adopting a rights-based approach in governance and justice to ensure equitable access to natural resources and transparency in managing those resources; implementing the 2030 Agenda; facilitating policy dialogue for greater food, water and energy security; and developing mechanisms for coordinated responses to climate change and other natural crises.

19.20 ESCWA will:

(a) Advocate for and raise awareness of global and regional commitments, in particular goals related to sustainable development, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and other Arab strategies and action plans for the integrated management of resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction;

(b) Serve as a forum for promoting multisectoral policy dialogue on sustainable development issues and priorities with the aim of forging regional positions and perspectives based on the exchange of information, lessons learned and best practice;

(c) Support member countries in their efforts to improve the efficient use of natural resources by analysing performance in these sectors, providing policy recommendations, promoting the application of appropriate green technologies and encouraging the integrated management of resources;

(d) Facilitate regional cooperation and coordination as a means to enhance food, water and energy security and alleviate poverty in rural areas;

(e) Support the development of national or regional mechanisms, networks or help desks for the integration of the different pillars of sustainable development;

(f) Foster regional approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation by supporting the development of mechanisms to deal with the impact of climate change and associated socioeconomic and environmental issues and examine impact and vulnerability assessments to inform the policymaking processes and support member countries in their negotiations.

19.21 This will be achieved by servicing intergovernmental bodies; conducting high-quality policy-oriented research and analytical work on the science-policy interface; organizing high-level and expert meetings; providing advisory services; implementing field projects, supporting dedicated knowledge platforms for professionals; and issuing technical materials to enhance the capacity to address sustainable development issues and challenges.

19.22 Work under the subprogramme will strive to maximize synergies through collaboration with different United Nations agencies, regional commissions and

organizations and participation in the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanisms on water resources and energy, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

Subprogramme 2
Social development

Objective of the Organization: To achieve the adoption by member States of a rights-based approach to equitable, inclusive and participatory social development towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Further development by member States of rights-based social policies or programmes that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on social inclusion and social protection	(i) Increased number of policies or programmes developed or enhanced to improve social protection and expand the provision of social services (ii) Increased number of policies or programmes targeting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups
(b) Increased engagement of member States in intraregional consultations towards the elaboration and implementation of policies that maximize the development impact of international migration	(i) Increased number of instances in which member States engage in regional-level policy dialogue on international migration facilitated by ESCWA (ii) Increased number of policies that reflect member States' awareness of the development opportunities and challenges of international migration
(c) Increased emphasis by member States on a social justice approach to development planning based on equality, equity and participation	(i) Increased number of governmental and non-governmental institutions that apply ESCWA tools in policymaking towards fostering social justice for all (ii) Increased number of member States engaged in multi-stakeholder consultations on key national and regional social development priorities facilitated by ESCWA

Strategy

19.23 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Social Development Division. ESCWA is fully engaged with member States and supports their efforts to identify policy priorities in the field of social development, taking into account major regional trends and emerging issues. It pays particular attention to the impact of the political instability and conflicts in the region on the well-being of its population and promotes a rights-based approach to inclusive social policymaking.

19.24 During the period 2018-2019, ESCWA will build on the experience gained during the previous periods to support countries in the implementation of the social dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. Specific attention will be paid to promoting and implementing policies that foster social inclusion and social protection; mainstreaming key population and human development issues into policymaking, focusing on youth development and international migration; and advocating the principles of social justice as a guiding framework for policymaking.

19.25 The adoption of equitable, inclusive and sustainable development policies is central to achieving social justice. Special attention will be placed on the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, informal workers, migrants and the poor, including in the context of support provided by ESCWA for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

19.26 Given the matrix structure of the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda and the focus of the Agenda on social inclusion, ESCWA will support member States in strengthening policy integration, including in the areas of economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, in particular youth, sustainable communal services and urban development. It will also assist them in improving the governance of social inclusion, including through broader-based civic participation.

19.27 ESCWA will conduct normative analysis to support social policy reform through regional consultations and technical cooperation activities, including advisory services, capacity-building workshops and field projects. It will continue to act as a regional platform for the exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in key social development areas within and beyond the Arab region. Partnerships and cooperation will be further strengthened with other regional commissions, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations and civil society organizations.

Subprogramme 3
Economic development and integration

Objective of the Organization: To achieve a basic standard of living for all people in member States through sustained and more inclusive economic development within a more integrated region

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) More effective responses by member States to reduce poverty by adopting and implementing multidimensional poverty approaches	(i) Increased number of member States that agree on a regional action plan addressing multidimensional poverty
	(ii) Increased number of member States that adopt policies to promote new methods of monitoring indicators related to multidimensional poverty and inequality
	(iii) Increased number of member States that adopt and implement inclusive plans and policies toward to addressing multidimensional poverty and inequality

(b) Increased effectiveness by member States in filling the financing gap and raising funds from traditional and innovative sources to meet international development agendas	(i) Increased number of member States that implement measures to mobilize financial resources for development according to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda
	(ii) Increased number of member States that adopt regulatory reforms and legislation to enhance the business environment
(c) Enhanced enabling macroeconomic policy environment for regional integration supported by policy assessment tools	(i) Increased number of institutions that develop knowledge-based economic tools and strategies with the support of ESCWA
	(ii) Increased number of member States that develop and implement policies using ESCWA forecasting tools
(d) Increased application of principles of good economic governance to promote inclusive economic transformation and regional integration	(i) Increased number of member States that use economic governance indicators to inform policymaking in the public and private sector
	(ii) Increased number of member States that adopt policies for economic transformation and improved economic governance to facilitate development of viable regional value chains and connectivity to global value chains
(e) Improved regional coordination among member States for cross-border infrastructure, especially in transport and trade facilitation	(i) Increased number of member States that adopt and implement regional or bilateral cross-border trade and trade facilitation agreements, such as the Arab Customs Union, towards enhancing intraregional and interregional trade
	(ii) Increased number of member States that adopt and implement ESCWA recommendations to enhance the coordination of their macroeconomic and sectoral policies for trade promotion
	(iii) Increased number of member States that adopt the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq agreements and create national committees for transport and trade facilitation

Strategy

19.28 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Economic Development and Integration Division. During the period 2018-2019, ESCWA will assist member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and greater social justice. The subprogramme strategy for 2018-2019 is essentially a continuation of that adopted for 2016-2017. Having designed several effective monitoring tools on poverty, inequality and fiscal policy effectiveness by the end of the period 2016-2017, ESCWA will focus more sharply

on advocacy and policy support to member States by using these tools in the period 2018-2019. It will produce further evidence-based analytical reports and technical studies to identify gaps and solutions in those areas with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account national and regional priorities. In this context, ESCWA will work in close collaboration with the League of Arab States.

19.29 ESCWA will also support member States in implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. It will focus on mobilizing financial resources and designing appropriate financing policies to address socioeconomic development gaps and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

19.30 The lack of participation in policy dialogue, particularly on government budgets, remains one of the impediments to social justice in the region. In order to support constructive dialogue on government budget and fiscal policy, it is essential for national policymaking institutions and stakeholders to be able to conduct evidence-based policy assessments. ESCWA will support national policymaking institutions and other stakeholders in the development of evidence-based policy assessment tools based on economic models, to create an enabling macroeconomic policy environment for regional integration and to implement the 2030 Agenda.

19.31 ESCWA will carry out various types of activities aimed at promoting economic transformation and building the capacities of member States in that regard. It will promote the expansion of exports by enhancing infrastructure efficiency and adopting efficient economic policies. This will enable the private sector to increase its competitiveness, increase production of value-added goods and services, develop regional value chains and improve connectivity to global value chains in areas where the region has comparative advantages, benefiting from its available natural, capital and human resources.

19.32 In order to provide evidence-based advocacy for regional economic integration and identify focus areas for the Arab region, ESCWA will undertake rigorous quantitative analyses of the legal and institutional arrangements that are necessary for creating an environment that fosters regional economic integration and the achievement of regional developmental objectives, including high economic growth rates and labour-intensive economic growth.

Subprogramme 4
Technology for development and regional integration

Objective of the Organization: To harness the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of technology to promote inclusive and sustainable development

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Strengthened national institutional frameworks on technology for development and innovation	(i) Increased number of policies, strategies and plans issued on technology for development and innovation
	(ii) Increased number of policies revised to foster technology for development and innovation

(b) Increased regional cooperation to promote technology and innovation for sustainable development	(i) Increased number of institutional bodies and networks aimed at strengthening regional integration and streamlining technological cooperation established or reinforced
	(ii) Increased number of regional initiatives put in place that promote collaboration in science, technology and innovation
(c) Strengthened national institutional frameworks to facilitate technology transfer	(i) Increased number of member States that participate in initiatives to transfer technology for development and innovation
	(ii) Increased number of member States that develop cross-sectoral plans for the transfer of technology for more competitive economies

Strategy

19.33 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Technology for Development Division. Technology and knowledge play a major role in the move towards a productive knowledge society. Recent technological advancements have modified the principles of economic growth and affected all economic sectors. The capacity of member States to adapt and contribute to ever-accelerating changes in technology and knowledge varies significantly. With the continued monitoring and implementation of activities pertaining to various sustainable development initiatives, the work under the subprogramme will harness the power of technology to help and guide member States in their transitions towards information societies and knowledge-based economies.

19.34 To meet the development needs of member States, work under the subprogramme will consist of preparing analytical studies with policy recommendations, convening meetings, providing advisory services and implementing development projects in partnership with national and regional stakeholders. ESCWA will endeavour to enhance regional collaboration and foster partnerships aimed at harnessing research and development in technology and innovation for socioeconomic development. The various activities undertaken will serve as catalysts for change in national and regional policymaking and will help member States devise result-driven strategies. They will promote the adoption of comprehensive sets of measurements and indicators that will help in strategic decision-making and identifying priority areas of policy action. ESCWA will undertake field projects that incorporate a social dimension, seek the active involvement of local communities, pay special attention to the employment needs of young people and advocate the empowerment of women.

19.35 More specifically, the work of ESCWA under the subprogramme will leverage technology to smooth the transition of the countries of the region towards knowledge economies and the information society. It will focus on enhancing the competitiveness of technological sectors, creating enabling environments, promoting the development of innovative e-services and advocating the adoption and implementation of new trends in e-government, with a special emphasis on open government initiatives. The ESCWA Technology Centre (Amman) will assist

production sectors, universities and research centres in member States to acquire the tools and capabilities necessary to adapt and develop suitable technologies that are critical to solving sustainability challenges.

Subprogramme 5
Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

Objective of the Organization: To transform the regional statistical system into a well-coordinated and functional system of national and regional statistics with the aim of producing and sharing statistical data in support of the 2030 Agenda for Development

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved coordination within the regional statistical system supporting data-sharing and joint statistical capacity development based on regional frameworks	(i) Increased number of member States adopt agreements and guidelines for a regional statistical system (ii) Increased number of harmonized databases, joint questionnaires and joint data products
(b) Increased availability of statistics for evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda through implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations	(i) Increased proportion of sustainable development indicators with full disaggregation produced at the national level (ii) Increased number of member States that provide at least 60 per cent of core socioeconomic indicators for the core data sets
(c) Increased availability of statistical data about the region, based on data produced and disseminated by member States to achieve national and regional goals	(i) Increased number of statistical methodologies, indexes and data sets developed and adopted in the framework of the ESCWA Statistical Committee (ii) Increased number of initiatives developed using statistical methodologies, indexes and data sets

Strategy

19.36 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Statistics Division. There is a continued need to improve the quality, relevance, availability and comparability of statistics in the region. Those improvements must be made primarily within the national statistical systems of member States.

19.37 In that context, ESCWA will offer a comprehensive institutional framework to steer the regional statistical development agenda, in cooperation with regional and international partners. It will provide capacity development to member States in collecting, analysing and disseminating statistical data for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Data and statistical enhancements will be critical for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

19.38 Institutional development for official statistics will, therefore, remain the first priority to enable member States to produce high-quality statistics that meet international standards and recommendations. ESCWA will support member States in improving their institutional set-up and legal framework for official statistics in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. It will also assist them in conducting assessments of national statistical systems aimed at defining strategies for the development of statistics. This will include developing the technical capacity and skills needed for the conduct of statistical surveys and censuses, as well as promoting the exchange of knowledge and good practices among member States.

19.39 Taking into account the 2030 Agenda and the results of needs analyses for the development of official statistics in the region, the following thematic areas will be addressed in the period 2016-2020: civil registration and vital statistics, multidimensional poverty, population and housing censuses (2020 round), statistical business registers, national accounts, statistics on trade in services, price statistics, environment statistics and key development indicators.

19.40 Some areas of governance and security, conflict, human rights and well-being are currently not sufficiently covered by official statistics. Taking into consideration that the ESCWA technical and resource capacity may not be sufficient to incorporate the new thematic areas, these may have to be addressed in a broader partnership incorporating academia and civil society organizations.

19.41 ESCWA will also work with regional and global partners, including the League of Arab States, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, the regional offices of the United Nations specialized agencies, the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Energy Agency and other regional and international partners.

19.42 ESCWA is mandated to provide data and analytical services to stakeholders in member States, in partner organizations and within ESCWA, primarily on the basis of data produced by national statistical systems. User needs and satisfaction surveys will be conducted periodically to assess the impact of data disseminated by ESCWA, and the data collection, and dissemination programme will be adjusted accordingly.

19.43 ESCWA will work towards formulating consensus-based agreements and guidelines for the harmonization and comparability of official statistics. Under the auspices of the ESCWA Statistical Committee, this work will be delegated to advisory groups established under specific priority areas. ESCWA will then work with national statistical systems to implement the new methodologies and guidelines developed through these advisory groups.

19.44 In order to enhance coherence among regional and international statistical agencies, ESCWA will play an active role in the cooperation and coordination initiatives undertaken by the regional and global statistical systems.

19.45 In order to accomplish the strategy of the subprogramme, ESCWA will act as a centre of excellence and a forum for the exchange of views on statistical issues; provide training at the national, subregional and regional levels; work on data quality assurance, estimation techniques and the implementation of international classifications and recommendations in cooperation with national statistical offices;

respond to requests for technical assistance; and assist in the exchange of expertise between member States.

Subprogramme 6
Advancement of women

Objective of the Organization: To reduce gender imbalances and improve the empowerment of women in line with international conventions and conferences

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Strengthened institutional and legal frameworks of member States to promote gender equality and gender justice, including the elimination of violence against women	(i) Increased number of member States with strategies and plans promoting gender equality and gender justice
	(ii) Increased number of legislative reforms aimed at the elimination of discrimination against women, gender inequality and/or violence against women
(b) Increased gender mainstreaming in national policies	Increased number of member States with policies and plans to mainstream gender
(c) Increase in monitoring and evaluation by member States of regional and institutional obligations on gender equality	(i) Increased number of member States submitting reports on their implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and responding to the observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
	(ii) Increased number of member States with national plans to implement and report on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and gender-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Strategy

19.46 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the ESCWA Centre for Women. During the period 2018-2019, ESCWA will continue to work with member States to reduce gender imbalance, increase respect for the rights of women and encourage the exchange of lessons learned. It will pursue the goals of promoting regional integration, implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving inclusive growth and social justice in the Arab region. To do so, ESCWA will work closely with national machineries for the advancement of women, national stakeholders, United Nations agencies and regional organizations to facilitate change by bridging the knowledge gap and equipping member States with relevant tools to achieve gender equality and the advancement of women at all social, economic and institutional levels.

19.47 With respect to regional integration, ESCWA will build on shared characteristics and challenges in the Arab States in order to create a platform for the adoption of regional measures in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It will seek to coordinate a regional position and enhance regional synergies by establishing and strengthening regional mechanisms and strategies in line with the international obligations of the Arab States. Particular attention will be paid to subregions currently in or emerging from conflict.

19.48 Moreover, ESCWA will support member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the provision of tools, advisory services and programmes to strengthen the capacity of national institutions, especially national machineries for the advancement of women, to develop and implement gender-sensitive and gender-specific strategies and action plans, particularly in the area of violence against women, to end harmful practices and to ensure women's full and effective participation in public life.

19.49 In order to reach those objectives, ESCWA will conduct evidence-based research and prepare high quality knowledge products, including in-depth studies, situation analyses and policy briefs. It will design and deliver tailor-made capacity-building programmes and tools, including training modules, that are based on international standards and respond to the needs of the region. It will partner with national and regional stakeholders and implement joint activities, including expert group meetings, workshops, thematic conferences and awareness-raising events on women's rights and gender equality.

Subprogramme 7
Conflict mitigation and development

Objective of the Organization: To mitigate the impact of crises, including occupation, and to address development and institutional challenges associated with ongoing transformations in the Arab region

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) More effective responses by member States to address the root causes and impact of conflict and to mitigate its spillover effects	(i) Increased number of member States adopt strategies and measures to address the root causes and impact of conflict and the potential relapse into conflict
	(ii) Increased number of member States seeking and receiving technical assistance related to effectively responding to the impact of conflict and crises, addressing their root causes and mitigating their spillover effects
(b) Further developed national and regional institutions to mitigate the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people and the Arab region, as well as advance efforts to assist the Palestinian people in securing their inalienable rights and enhancing their resilience	(i) Number of instances of national and regional institutions utilizing analysis and policy recommendations on the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people and the Arab region

	(ii) Increased number of national and regional institutions receiving technical assistance in capacity-building for mitigating the impact of Israeli occupation
(c) Strengthened resilience of public institutions in member States, including least developed countries, to develop governance strategies responding to the institutional and development challenges associated with social and economic transformations in the region	(i) Increased number of member States, including least developed countries, developing cross-sectoral policies to respond to challenges associated with social and economic transformations in the region
	(ii) Increased number of partnerships between least developed countries and development partners towards the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

Strategy

19.50 The subprogramme is under the substantive responsibility of and will be implemented by the Division for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues. The development process in the Arab region has been greatly challenged by conflict and occupation and their spillover effects. These have placed enormous strains on the ability of public institutions to lead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of inclusive growth, social justice and peaceful and inclusive societies.

19.51 A number of member States are facing conflict or are directly threatened by it. The Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands continues. Underperforming economies and institutional challenges in conflict-stricken countries, coupled with fragmentation, the mushrooming of armed non-State actors, the spread of radical exclusivist ideologies, massive human rights violations and direct foreign military intervention, have led to great human suffering. Protracted conflict has posed unprecedented development and institutional challenges, not only to member States but also to countries beyond the Arab region. These challenges bear serious immediate and generational development costs, the magnitude of which is presently unknown, and require urgent articulation of appropriate policies and programmes.

19.52 To achieve the subprogramme's expected accomplishments, ESCWA will focus on: (a) enhancing the capacity of member States to address the root causes of conflict, analyse its impact on development and mitigate its spillover effects; (b) strengthening local and regional capacities to mitigate the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people and the Arab region and assist the Palestinian people in securing their inalienable rights and enhancing their resilience; and (c) supporting member States, including least developed countries, in formulating nationally led and owned strategies to respond to institutional and development challenges associated with transformations in the region.

19.53 ESCWA will support member States in understanding and responding to conflict through high-quality research and analysis, including on the origins, proximate causes and dynamics of conflict at the country and regional levels.

Through policy-oriented research, ESCWA will identify the immediate as well as the generational impacts of conflict on development, including implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in member States and the region. ESCWA will also identify the monitoring and analytical needs of member States to assist them in enhancing their capacities in those areas and consequently in formulating mitigation policies and programmes.

19.54 In consultation with Palestinian institutions, ESCWA will undertake analytical and programmatic activities to assist member States in: (a) raising awareness and concern about the impact and cost of occupation on development in Palestine and the region; (b) enhancing the capacity of public and civic institutions to mitigate the negative impact of occupation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (c) supporting institutions seeking to advocate Palestinian rights, attain justice and implement international law; and (d) mobilizing resources to assist the Palestinian people and their institutions. ESCWA will also solicit assistance from regional and international experts and cooperate with national, regional and internationai entities, while ensuring Palestinian ownership throughout the process.

19.55 Through the subprogramme's analytical work, ESCWA will help identify the critical set of institutions and sequencing of reforms that are needed in countries in transition or phasing to transition out of conflict and will promote reconciliation. It will assist them in achieving peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies, providing justice for all and building accountable institutions, which are key prerequisites for progress in all the other Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, ESCWA will foster impartial "spaces" that enable national dialogue and will design and implement training modules to enhance the capacity of public institutions in essential service delivery. It will also assist the Arab least developed countries in formulating national development plans reflecting the priorities of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in designing risk assessment methodologies to foster resilience to external and internal shocks and in maximizing synergies for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions

68/196	United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development
68/224	Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
68/241	United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region
69/214	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
69/230	Culture and sustainable development
69/239	South-South cooperation

69/277	Political declaration on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations
69/307	Cross-cutting issues
69/315	Draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1818 (LV)	Establishment of an economic commission for Western Asia
1985/69	Amendment of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Western Asia: change of name of the Commission
1998/46	Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
2014/9	Report of the Committee for Development Policy
2014/36	Redesignation of the Technical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the Executive Committee and amendment of its terms of reference
2015/11	Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its seventeenth session
2015/15	Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
2015/26	Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
2015/30	Restructuring the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda
2015/32	Admission of Mauritania as a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

314 (XXVIII)	The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development
315 (XXVIII)	Establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development
316 (XXVIII)	Support for the Palestinian people
317 (XXVIII)	Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017

318 (XXVIII)	Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
320 (XXVIII)	Redesignating the Technical Committee as the "Executive Committee" and amending its terms of reference
	Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development

General Assembly resolutions

68/209	Agricultural technology for development
68/211	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
68/212	Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind
68/213	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
68/217	Sustainable mountain development
68/233	Agriculture development, food security and nutrition
69/215	International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources
69/220	Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind
69/221	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
69/222	Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development
69/225	Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy
69/240	Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2011/5	The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women
2011/21	Human settlements

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

281 (XXV)	Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region
305 (XXVII)	Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

Subprogramme 2
Social development

General Assembly resolutions

68/130	Policies and programmes involving youth
68/131	Promoting social integration through social inclusion
68/133	Cooperatives in social development
68/143	Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa
68/181	Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders
69/142	Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond
69/143	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
69/229	International migration and development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/3	Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development
2014/5	Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all
2015/3	Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
2015/4	Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda
2015/10	2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

295 (XXVI)	Guiding Declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to Youth Policies: An Opportunity for Development
304 (XXVII)	The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development

Subprogramme 3
Economic development and integration

General Assembly resolutions

68/200	Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries
68/201	International financial system and development
68/222	Development cooperation with middle-income countries
68/269	Improving global road safety
69/205	International trade and development
69/207	External debt sustainability and development
69/208	Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development
69/213	Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development
69/227	Towards a New International Economic Order
69/313	Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/5	Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

296 (XXVI)	Enhancing public sector institutions and resources to attain national development goals
303 (XXVII)	Towards enhancing the macroeconomic policy in ESCWA member countries
313 (XXVII)	Frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region

Subprogramme 4
Technology for development and regional integration

General Assembly resolutions

68/198	Information and communications technologies for development
68/209	Agricultural technology for development
68/220	Science, technology and innovation for development
68/302	Modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
69/204	Information and communications technologies for development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/27	Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
2014/28	Science, technology and innovation for development
2014/35	Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
2015/27	Science, technology and innovation for development

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

294 (XXVI)	Establishment of the ESCWA technology centre
306 (XXVII)	Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field

Subprogramme 5
Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

General Assembly resolutions

68/261	Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/31	A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

276 (XXIV)	Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region
283 (XXV)	ESCWA member country compliance with international standards for enhancing national statistical systems

286 (XXV)	Gender statistics for equality and empowerment of women
287 (XXV)	Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking
297 (XXVI)	Arab MDG monitor for societal progress

Subprogramme 6
Advancement of women

General Assembly resolutions

68/137	Violence against women migrant workers
68/138	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
68/139	Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas
68/181	Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders
68/191	Taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls
68/227	Women in development
69/147	Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls
69/149	Trafficking in women and girls
69/151	Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
69/236	World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2015/6	Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women
2015/12	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system
2015/13	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women
2015/21	Taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls

Subprogramme 7
Conflict mitigation and development

General Assembly resolutions

68/211	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
68/235	Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources
68/303	Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution
69/291	Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa
69/327	Promoting inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/1	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women
2014/26	Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Economic and Social Council for Western Asia resolutions

271 (XXIV)	Strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development
282 (XXV)	Mitigating the impact on development of conflict, occupation and instability in ESCWA member countries
292 (XXVI)	Upgrading the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to the level of a division and establishing a governmental committee on emerging issues and development in conflict settings
296 (XXVI)	Enhancing public sector institutions and resources to attain national development goals

Security Council resolutions

1947 (2010)	Post-conflict peacebuilding